



THE FALLACIES OF HOMEOPATHY.

DISEASES, and whatever pertains to them, must be worthy of the attention of the public so long as all are liable to their ravages. Nothing of a material nature lies so near men's interests as those conditions which affect their health and life; and yet there is often an indifference to the subject, and a neglect to inquire into its details, which is quite surprising. It is, however, gratifying to know that the amount of indifference and ignorance which has existed in the past is fast diminishing at the present.

The action of our general Government in establishing a sanitary commission, the appointment of numerous State boards of health, the holding of public sanitary conventions, the production of popular works on health, and the frequent references to the subject in our periodical literature, evince the change which is happily taking place. To the wonderful diffusion of scientific knowledge during the past few decades, is largely due the present intelligent interest in these subjects; and the recent assassination and long struggle for life of the President of the United States, and the illness of the late Prime Minister of England, with their accompanying circumstances, have brought before the minds of the masses of civilized people details which had not before received so general attention.

The events of the illness of Lord Beaconsfield have brought to the notice of the public the so-called different systems of medicine, and especially the relations existing between those designated as regular physicians, and those who take the name of homeopathsists. In this case, the refusal of a distinguished court physician to visit the patient while a reputed homeopathist was in attendance, notwithstanding the special request of the Queen; and the reluctant consent of another, only after the reputed homeopathist had denied his adherence to the homeo-

pathic system, and had promised to follow all the directions of the regular physician, became matters of public notoriety and comment, and various opinions as to the consistency and liberality of the physicians concerned have been freely expressed.

Many are unable to understand this great repugnance and general refusal of regular physicians to sustain professional relations with homeopaths; and, without informing themselves of the reasons of such feelings and conduct, regard them as illiberal and unreasonable.

It is inconsistent with the laws of character and the springs of human action, that the great mass of modern scientific physicians,—men whose education and training have tended to excite in them a love of truth and a desire for its attainment, the object of whose study has been to relieve suffering, and whose occupation has been so largely one of benevolence,—it is inconsistent with the general conduct of such men that they should be unwilling to accept any doctrine, and use any means, which, in their judgment, will tend to the accomplishment of their high purposes. They have shown a readiness, and even an eagerness, to entertain new ideas and accept new truths; and the great changes in opinions and practice, and the wonderful advances in medical science in recent times, attest this fact. Truth has been readily embraced, from whatever source emanating. Jenner received the facts of vaccination from dairymen; many of the views of Priessnitz respecting the use of water have been accepted; a large number of new remedies brought into notice by the so-called Thompsonians and Eclectics have been investigated and adopted; anæsthesia was received from dentists; and new modes of preparing and administering medicines, both in much smaller and larger doses than those recommended by standard authors, are constantly put in practice.

It would seem that there must be some special reason why the system of homeopathy is rejected with such contempt by scientific and discriminating men—by those who should be qualified to judge of its merits; and why men so liberal in other cases should regard with such repugnance associations with homeopaths. This can be found only in the character of the system, which it is the object of this article to show.

Although homeopathy has been before the world for three-quarters of a century, and has received in some circles a considerable share of patronage, very few outside of the medical

profession understand what it really is. To many who are intelligent and even learned in other matters, the whole subject of medicine is shrouded in darkness and mystery. An understanding of it, sufficient to form an intelligent opinion respecting its doctrines, requires attention to details which very few not of the profession ever bestow.

It will not be possible within the limits of a magazine article to give a full view of homeopathy, in contrast with regular medicine, but it may be possible to present the leading tenets of the system as promulgated by its founder and authoritative exponents, so that those who give attention to the matter may see reasons why its doctrines cannot be accepted, and why they are so intensely opposed by the regular profession.

Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of this system, was born in Saxony, in 1775. He manifested early a facility for learning languages, and was afforded opportunities for study by which he became an assistant teacher in a grammar school, and afterward turned his attention in part to the study of medicine. These studies were pursued chiefly at Leipsic; but during his two and a half years' residence there, he is reported as having spent most of his time in translating books and giving lessons in German and Latin for his support. He was a few months in Vienna, where he met with the visionary Mesmer, and is said by his biographers to have been impressed with his and other transcendental notions, which much influenced his after life. He received his medical degree at Erlangen, when he was twenty-four years of age, after which he attempted to obtain practice in twenty-four different places in the course of twenty-eight years, devoting much of his time, however, to chemistry, botany, and other subjects; and for some months of this period he had charge of an insane asylum. After this career, during which, according to the statement of Dr. Dudgeon, editor of the "*British Journal of Homeopathy*," "he does not seem to have done much in the way of medical practice," in 1806, at the age of fifty-one, he published a pamphlet on the "*Medicine of Experience*," and followed this by bitter denunciations, in a popular journal, of ancient and modern medicine. This attracted attention, and secured him some practice; and in 1810, when he was fifty-five, he commenced, at Leipsic, to lecture on homeopathy. Not confining himself to the promulgation of his peculiar doctrines, he assailed those of others, and was so bitter in his invectives that his classes deserted

him, and he ceased to lecture for want of hearers. He was, however, more successful with his writings; and, removing to Cœthen, he devoted himself to the publication of his doctrines and to the practice of his new method, which was chiefly in chronic cases and by mail—his patients writing to him their symptoms, for which he prescribed his medicines. His works became numerous, the most important being his “Organon,” in which he expounds his principles, his “Materia Medica Pura,” a voluminous work, and his “Chronic Diseases,” in four volumes.

This brief sketch of the founder of homeopathy will tend to explain the possibility of the existence of a system so marvelous as we shall find it. He has been exalted almost to a demi-god by his followers, but to others he seems to have been a restless, ambitious, vain, perambulating visionary, imbittered by his want of success, who gave vent to his bitterness against a profession in which he had failed to obtain distinction or a competency. In his disappointment, his ambition and his vanity did not desert him.

In the preface to the “Organon” he says: “The true art of healing remained undiscovered until my time”; and his claim to the discovery of an entirely new and essentially true system of medical practice has been maintained by his disciples. Homeopathy, as an exclusive and complete system, was an invention of the “Sage of Cœthen”; but long before his time, in the days of speculative philosophy, three general methods of cure had received a theoretical recognition, and one of them embraced the central dogma of the Hahnemannian system. These methods were the *antipathic*, the *allopathic*, and the *homeopathic*. As the names imply, the first indicated the application of remedies which produce effects opposite to the disease; the second, effects different from, but not directly opposite to the disease; while the third indicated the use of remedies which produce effects like the disease. Hahnemann adopted, or, as he claimed, discovered, as the universal or “sole law of cure in all diseases,” the latter speculative idea. This doctrine is expressed in the oft-repeated formula of *similia similibus curantur*, and is the central article in the homeopathic creed. It, however, necessarily carries with it several other doctrines, constituting the system which it is the object of this paper briefly to examine.

The articles of this creed may be arranged in the following order:

First. The principle of *similia similibus curantur*, as a universal law.

Second. The prescribing medicines for symptoms alone.

Third. Imponderable or infinitesimal doses.

Fourth. The potentization of medicines, or the development of new and extraordinary powers within them, by rubbing and shaking.

Fifth. The special mode of preparation by trituration with sugar of milk, or by shaking with alcohol or alcohol and water, diluting on the centesimal scale.

Sixth. The prescribing of a single simple medicine at a time.

Seventh. The special method of "provings" by administering medicines to persons in health.

Eighth. The mode of administering by placing pellets on the tongue, and by olfaction or smelling.

Ninth. The psora or itch doctrine of the founder.

It is not alleged that all these professed articles of belief are held by all homeopaths of the present day. Those, however, are the doctrines taught by Hahnemann and his consistent disciples; they are still more or less fully taught in their text-books and their schools; and if they do not constitute the homeopathic creed, if they do not include and represent the doctrines of homeopathy, then it is impossible to determine what that creed is, and what the doctrines of that system are. That they are the real homeopathic doctrines we shall show; we shall endeavor to point out their import; and it will be seen how impossible it is to accept them, or for scientific physicians to have professional relations with those who profess to believe and be governed by them.

As to the central doctrine of "like curing like" as a universal and exclusive principle, Hahnemann is very explicit, and his assertions cannot be misunderstood. In the "Organon," he says: "In every case, a medicine" must be given "which can itself produce an affection similar to that sought to be cured. The truth is only to be found in this method." "It is not possible," he continues, "to perform a cure but by the aid of a remedy which produces symptoms similar to those of the disease itself." Again, "it is the only therapeutical law conformable to nature."

Dr. Scott, a leading English homeopathist, says: "The essential characteristic of the homeopathic school is singly and simply the adoption of a law of treatment applicable to all forms

of disease, expressed by the words *similia similibus curantur*." Further quotations from authoritative homeopathic writers to the same effect could be made indefinitely, but these are deemed sufficient to show that this is an essential article in the creed. To abandon this would be to surrender the system, and to prove this untrue would be to show the system to be false.

It is always difficult to prove a negative by direct argument, however absurd the positive proposition may be. It would not be easy to formulate an argument against the assumption of Bishop Berkeley that tar-water was a universal remedy, or against the claims made for Perkins's tractors that they would draw all diseases from the body, or to prove demonstratively that the many "sure and only cures" which are advertised for various diseases will not fulfill the promises made for them. The burthen of proof is with those who make the assertions, and much testimony from respectable persons can usually be found for such pretensions; but when such allegations and spurious proofs fail to convince those who understand the subject and have had full opportunities of judging, the proposition may be safely rejected as untenable. That the dogma we are examining has failed to receive the assent of the great mass of scientific physicians the world over, is unquestioned.

But more positive proof than this is afforded. It is too generally and positively known to be questioned, that iodine cures the goitre, quinine the ague, and sulphur the itch, while no conditions like these diseases are produced by these respective remedies. If these facts be admitted, and there are many others of the same kind, then it is certain that *similia similibus curantur* is not the "only law of cure."

But it is declared, and with what force of truth we shall see, that it is no law of cure at all; or, at the very least, that it is not of sufficient applicability to make it commonly available in practice. The simple fact is that medicines, when they are curative, produce an effect different from the disease; and whatever resemblance may be imagined, or may really exist, between the effects of a remedy and the phenomena of the disease it modifies, the cure, if a cure is produced, is accomplished by the difference and not by the similarity which exists between the effects of the remedy and the disease. No one has defined the degree of similarity between the remedy and the disease necessary for the operation of the alleged law. In similarity there is a differ-

ence, and it is too evident to require further statement that by the difference the cure is effected.

This truth is so apparent, that the more thoughtful modern members of the homeopathic sect admit that homeopathy is a misnomer, and that medicines produce their curative effects by causing actions contrary to the diseases for which they are given. Three leading homeopaths in London have recently made these admissions in the "Lancet." This certainly seems to be yielding the whole question; but still these men claim that medicines are *selected* on the principle of similarity of effects, though they *cure* on the principle of opposition. But the alleged essential law is that like *cures* like. The claim of only *selecting* medicines from the similarity of their effects to the symptoms of the disease is the last stand of those who have been driven by logical necessity from one position to another; and this claim must be maintained unless every particle of pretense to homeopathy is given up. A system resting on so narrow a basis must topple to the ground—has, it is believed, already fallen. This conviction is confirmed by the fact, now so notorious, that in the practice of nearly all homeopaths the rule of similars is not observed in the selection of remedies. But we have here to do with the system as promulgated by its author and his real followers, rather than with the practices of those who retain a nominal position in a medical sect.

Associated with the dogma of like curing like is the principle of prescribing for symptoms alone,—of giving medicines which will produce symptoms like those of the disease, without regard to causes, or to the more hidden changes, learned from the study of morbid anatomy and the nature of pathological processes. Hahnemann, in the "Organon," says: "Only that which is necessary for the physician to know of disease, and which is fully sufficient for the purpose of cure, is rendered evident to his senses." "In short, the *ensemble* of the symptoms is the principal and sole object that a physician ought to have in view in every case of disease."

The character of other homeopathic writings is in accordance with this view. Thus, in Jahr's Manual, a standard homeopathic text-book, are found such directions as these: "For absence of mind, irresoluteness—the remedy, alum." "Absence of mind with confusion of thought,—cupr." "Making mistakes in writing,—nat. carb." "Fear of death,—dig." "Pain in the big toe,

as if sprained,—mosch.," etc. Mere symptoms, some the most trivial, have remedies set opposite to them which are supposed to be capable of producing similar phenomena.

In prescribing medicines for symptoms on the principle that "like cures like,"—in giving opium for stupor, irritants for an acutely inflamed stomach, an article that will produce a pain for the cure of a similar pain, *i. e.*, in ordinary doses, it was found that the symptoms were increased instead of being relieved; and this difficulty was met by diminishing the dose. Small doses necessarily followed the dogma of similars.

Says Hahnemann: "The suitableness of a medicine in any given case of disease does not depend on its accurate homeopathic selection alone, but on the size, or rather smallness, of the dose. A medicine of a positive and curative kind will, without fault in itself, produce just the contrary effect of that which it ought to do, if given in excessive quantity, by producing a greater disease than that present."

Commencing with small but sensible doses, he proceeded to the minute and insensible ones, and declared that the "minutest doses are always able to overcome the disease." "The very smallest, I repeat; for it holds good, and will continue to hold good, as a homeopathic therapeutic maxim, not to be refuted by any experience in the world, that the best dose of the properly selected remedy is always the *very smallest* one, in one of the high dynamizations (X or thirtieth dilution), as well for chronic as acute diseases—a truth that is the inestimable property of pure homeopathy," and which, he adds, in regard to allopathy and mongrel systems, "will keep pure homeopathy separated from these spurious arts as by an impassable gulf."

The extent to which dilutions or attenuations are carried can only be understood by a description of the mode of preparing the medicines, and this can best be given in Hahnemann's own words. Particular attention must be given to these descriptions for a proper understanding of this part of the subject.

In Hahnemann's "Organon" is this statement:

"If two drops of a mixture of equal parts of alcohol and the recent juice of any medicinal plant be diluted with ninety-eight drops of alcohol in a vial capable of containing one hundred and thirty drops (for the convenience of shaking), and the whole be twice shaken together, the medicine becomes exalted in energy to the first development of power, or, as it may be denominated, the first potence. The process is to be continued through twenty-nine

additional vials, each of equal capacity with the first, and each containing ninety-nine drops of alcohol, so that every successive vial after the first, being furnished with one drop from the vial or dilution immediately preceding (which has just been twice shaken), is, in its turn, to be shaken twice, remembering to number the dilution of each vial upon the cork as the operation proceeds. These manipulations are to be conducted through all the vials, from the first up to the thirtieth or decillionth development of power, which is the one in most general use."

With regard to solids, he adds :

"These were, in the first place, exalted in energy by attenuation in the form of powder by means of trituration in a mortar (in sugar), to the third, or millionth degree. Of this one grain was then dissolved and brought through twenty-seven vials by a process similar to that employed in the case of vegetable juices, up to the thirtieth development of power."

Directions as to the mode of administering are next given :

"The best mode of administration is to make use of small globules of sugar the size of mustard-seed ; one of these globules, having imbibed the medicine and being introduced into a vehicle, forms a dose containing about a three-hundredth part of a drop of the dilution, for three hundred of such globules will imbibe one drop of alcohol ; by placing one of these on the tongue, and not drinking anything after it." * * *

And then he adds :

"But if the patient be very sensitive, and it is necessary to employ the smallest dose possible, and attain at the same time the most speedy results, it will be sufficient to let him smell once."

Rau, in his "*Organon*," gives substantially the same directions ; and Hempel, one of the most recent homeopathic writers, says : "In order to obtain good homeopathic preparations, follow Hahnemann's rules as closely as may be possible and convenient." The essential matters of the dilutions on the centesimal scale, he evidently means to say, must be followed strictly, and the particular mode of triturations and shaking should be followed as closely as possible and convenient.

It is hoped the patience of the reader who wishes to know what the doctrines and professed practice of Hahnemannian homeopaths really are, will not be too severely taxed by an attempt to give a conception of what these statements mean, and of the extent of these dilutions. A statement of the following conclusions, without giving the language of the authors on which they are based, would seriously tax one's credulity.

according to computation, would be equal to at least five hundred lakes as large as Lake Superior. The fifteenth dilution would require a body of fluid sixty-one times greater than this earth, and the thirtieth would actually take a quantity of fluid exceeding the volume of a quadrillion of suns.

Various calculations have been made by different writers with the view of giving as definite notions as possible of these infinitesimal doses, but they only approximate to the actual fact.

The dilutions are divided by Dr. Hempel into four classes, viz. :

First. Lower—up to the 6th attenuation.

Second. Middle—from the 6th to the 30th.

Third. Higher—from the 30th to the 200th.

Fourth. Highest—above the 200th.

These highest go up to the 40,000th.

Dr. Simpson (Sir James), of Edinburgh, has shown by his calculations, confirmed by the mathematical professors of the University of Edinburgh, that at the fifteenth dilution, a mass of sugar or body of water would be required out of which sixty-one bodies could be made, each as large as our earth. The sixteenth would require one hundred times as many—*i. e.*, $61 \times 100 = 6,100$. Multiplying each time by one hundred, from the fifteenth to the thirtieth, fifteen times, would make thirty ciphers joined to the sixty-one,—making a bulk 61,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 times as large as the earth. In commenting upon these facts, Sir James Simpson writes :

“Surely, common sense and common sanity both dictate to the human mind that it is utterly impossible that any such dose from any such an inconceivable ocean, medicated by a single grain of any drug dissolved and mixed in it, can have any possible effect upon the human body, either in health or disease. We can but conclude with Dr. Forbes, that in rejecting homeopathy ‘we are discarding what is at once false and bad—useless to the suffering and degrading to the physician.’”

That these are the actual teachings of homeopathy, however incredible it may seem, every one who has given attention to the subject knows; and the repugnance which is felt by those acquainted with the fact cannot be difficult to understand.

To avoid the utterly repelling absurdity of believing these infinitesimal quantities of common matter capable of producing medicinal effects, Hahnemann was driven to the next named doctrine, that of *potentization*, or the communication of a new

dynamic or spiritual power by the triturations and shakings used in the preparation of the dilutions. The medicines were declared to be increased in power by these processes; and the more they were divided and rubbed or shaken, the more of this new power was said to be communicated. In Hahnemann's words, "a great, hitherto unknown, undreamt-of change occurred in them." He was particular in directing that only two shakes be given to each dilution, lest the power should be developed to an excessive extent, and the potency become unmanageable. It is thought these notions were suggested by the claims of Mesmer, of having the ability to communicate extraordinary powers to dead matter. Our space does not allow extended quotations on this subject of potentizations, notwithstanding its importance to the homeopathic system. One other of Hahnemann's statements, however, showing "a method in his madness"—making an exception for a purpose—may be given. In his dilutions and shakings, alcohol was used as a vehicle, and this substance he admitted to have medicinal properties; but he declared it was an exception to all others in its relations to potentization. His words are, "Wine and alcohol are the only excitants the heating and intoxicating effects of which are diminished by their dilution with water."

All must see that unless some quality is added or developed by the process of preparation, such articles as carbon, common salt, carbonate of lime, sulphur, flint, etc.—articles existing in our food, and constituting essential elements of our bodies—cannot have the wonderful effects which the system ascribes to them. In Jahr's "*Materia Medica*," over four hundred and fifty symptoms are said to be produced, and consequently are capable of being cured, by common salt in the twentieth and thirtieth dilutions; and in our present time, this article, under the name of *nat. mur.*, is seriously advised at the thirtieth dilution by professors in a homeopathic college as a remedy for *ague*. Nearly the same number of symptoms and cures as by *table-salt* are attributed to dilutions of charcoal, chalk, and other substances which in ordinary quantities are inert.

The common mode of administering the medicines is in medicated sugar globules placed upon the tongue; but Hahnemann declares that "all that homeopathy is at all capable of curing . . . will be most safely and certainly cured by the mode of olfaction." He adds: "A pellet retains for this purpose all its powers for at least eighteen or twenty years (my experience

extends this length of time), though the phial be opened a thousand times during that period, if it be but protected from heat and the sun's light."

As to the administering a single medicine at a time, Hahnemann says: "In no case is it requisite to administer more than one single simple medicinal substance at one time. The true physician never thinks of giving of a remedy but a single simple medicinal substance." He, however, prescribed opium, which contains at least seven distinct crystalline substances, differing in their individual action; and Peruvian bark, also very often given, contains several distinct active principles.

To describe and illustrate the system of homeopathic "provings" would extend this article beyond its assigned limits. It must suffice to say that these provings are conducted by the administration of both crude or sensible and infinitesimal doses; and symptoms the most incongruous, contradictory, and often trivial are attributed to the effects of the most extreme dilutions of comparatively inert substances.

Various other minor doctrines were taught by Hahnemann, and are accepted by his disciples, but they cannot here be discussed.

The leading doctrines of the school have been presented in the language of its founder and its recognized exponents, and their statement seems a sufficient refutation. We have found homeopathy a definite system of positive dogmas, having various parts dependent upon each other. The leading doctrine of *similia similibus curantur* necessitates the doctrine of small doses,—so small, that at least their ordinary effects are imperceptible. This has led to the extreme dilutions; and this in turn to the doctrine of potentization. The assumption that medicines cure the conditions in the sick which they are capable of imitating in the well, led to the method of "provings." Further, this doctrine of similars is followed by the doctrine of the specific action of medicines,—that is, that certain medicinal articles have definite affinities with certain diseases. This view includes the ancient and exploded notion that diseases are distinct entities, or things by themselves, having a lodgment in the body. The homeopathic writers seem to regard diseases as material substances, having such qualities as attraction for particular remedies or correspondences with certain principles in medicines. Dr. Hempel, the modern author before referred

to, says: "Hahnemann taught the doctrine" (which Hempel indorses) "that it is the drug-force which effects cures. By drug-force we mean the *morbid essence* which materializes itself in the plant, and develops pathological lesions in the organism." As an example and illustration of the doctrine, he says: "Here is the stramonium-disease, the creative stramonium-force having invaded the organism where it meets a kindred recipient faculty. We act upon it by means of material molecules, for which the stramonium-force or essence has a stronger attractive affinity than for the organic tissues. If the drug molecules are not endowed with sufficient force to *draw the disease* to themselves, . . . the cure fails."

Now, all these assumptions and theories—not only the absurd theories themselves, but the practice of thus theorizing—are directly opposed to the whole spirit of modern science. In the darkness of the past, diseases were regarded as evil spirits to be exorcised, or driven out by some opposing or attracting influences; and these "relics of barbarism" seem to linger in some minds, as is shown in the above quotation.

Science has determined that diseases are phenomenal—are deviations from normal activities and normal compositions and structures in the organism. These wrong actions depend, to be sure, on disturbing agencies, some of which are material poisons, but others are injurious impressions from excesses or deficiencies, or other perversions of the conditions of life; but the diseases themselves are wrong actions or perverted physiological phenomena. The present established philosophy of disease is such that the advocacy, or even the discussion and comparison, of general systems of medicine, such as antipathy, allopathy, or homeopathy, are entirely out of place in our time, and belong to the past age of dreamy speculation, and not to the present of inductive science. Instead of diseases being considered as mysterious entities, to be dealt with on some theoretical exclusive plans, they are known to be aggregates of phenomena, to be modified by various agencies adapted to each case, but acting on no exclusive principle. Regular physicians profess no exclusive system. They repudiate the designation of allopathists; and they look upon the work of removing wrong conditions and actions in the animal organism as scientific mechanics do upon remedying the defects in a complex piece of mechanism. The intelligent mechanic would inquire into the conditions and causes

of the wrong actions, and proceed on scientific and common-sense principles to remove them. It would be very absurd to announce some exclusive principle of *similia similibus curantur* for correcting defective or wrong-going watches or engines ; and it is equally so to announce such a principle as alone applicable to the removal of wrong conditions and actions in the living mechanism. The analogy in this respect is perfect between the engine and the man ; the difference is in the greater complexity—the existence of a larger number of elements in the living human organism.

The limits of this article will not allow of a reply to all of the attempted arguments by which the pretensions of homeopathy have been sought to be sustained. Some of them, however, require a brief notice. One, the most plausible, and which has done much service, is based on the apparent analogy between the preventive influence of the vaccine disease over small-pox, and the alleged curative influence of medicines similar in their effects to the phenomena of disease. The minuteness of the quantity of infectious matter sufficient to produce disease has also been adduced to give plausibility to the notion that very minute quantities of medicines can produce effects. Attention to the facts concerned will show the fallacy of these arguments. It is well known that small-pox and a few other contagious diseases usually occur but once in the same person, and in the case of small-pox, the induction of the disease in a milder form prevents its repetition. Inoculation with its own virus produces a modified form of the affection of less severity. The vaccine virus, which is that of small-pox rendered much more mild by passing through the body of the cow, has the effect to produce a still milder form of the disease, but one which usually prevents a second occurrence. The operation of so small a quantity of the virus is accounted for by the fact that it is living and germinating, and during the period of its incubation in the system it largely multiplies, and considerable time elapses before its effects are realized. Vaccination is preventive, not curative, and is from identity, and not similarity. Scarlatina, which is similar to measles, will not prevent the recurrence of the latter, though an attack of either of these diseases will prevent a second one of the same affection. An attack of malarial fever will not prevent one of cholera or diphtheria ; and an occurrence of either of these last-named diseases has no preventive influence over a second one. Medicines are not living matters, are incapable of multiplication,

and require no period of incubation to produce their effects. Their operation once does not prevent their action again upon the same system; and when they do good they are curative, not preventive. It will thus be seen that the apparent analogy between their effects and the action of vaccination does not exist, and the arguments based upon it completely fail.

An argument in favor of the claims of homeopathy is based upon its having obtained the support of numbers of people. The adherence of numbers to a system, a faith, or a cause, is not an evidence of its truth or justice, especially when it contains elements of mystery, and does not admit of the test of direct demonstrative proof. Brahmanism, Mohammedanism, and in our own time and civilization, Spiritualism and Mormonism, have many adherents, but the truth of none of these is established. If, however, numerical adherence be the test of truth, it does not lie with homeopathy. The system has urged its claims for the last eighty years, and up to the present time, three generations of medical men have come and gone, while not one educated physician out of one hundred the world over has expressed views favorable to the dogmas we have been discussing. On the contrary, the great body of scientific medical men everywhere—almost all those of acknowledged prominence in the world of science—have denounced the Hahnemann system as the most arrant nonsense. The people who support it are certainly for the most part ignorant of the real character of the system. There is in many persons a tendency to put an undue value upon the mysterious and the unknown. Had the well-understood English word *like-cure* been applied to the system in place of the less understood Greek word homeopathy, its attractiveness would have been much less. Homeopathy has no position in the world of science. In the country of its origin, the great body of those best qualified to judge speak of the system of doctrines as a dream that is past, and of its practice as charlatanism and deception. Its professed adherents are not admitted to any professional associations. A leading German journal says: "The homeopathy of to-day is no science, not even a dogma—just a trade."

The efficacy of homeopathic medicines prepared and administered in the manner described, cannot be sustained on any rational principle. Those who have given intelligent attention to the subject must, and do, admit this. Those who really believe

in homeopathy do so on the evidence of the statements of others, or from the supposed effects which have been observed in the treatment of cases of disease.

The fallacies of medical experience are well known to all thoughtful physicians. Among the most obvious fallacies are errors as to the actual medicines taken. It is well known that very many, not to say nearly all, professed homeopathic practitioners often give medicines in sensible, and even in large doses, and not upon their professed exclusive principle. Thus, the real relief afforded and cures effected may not have been due to the homeopathic remedies.

But there are other fallacies perhaps more common than this. When a medicine is taken with the view of producing a certain effect, such as the relief of a symptom, and that relief follows, it is most natural that the patient and the prescriber should attribute the result to the medicine taken. As symptoms very often disappear spontaneously, or are removed by a variety of influences which may be overlooked, it is evident that the disappearance of a symptom after a medicine is taken does not prove the relation of cause and effect between the events.

The evidence that is required to prove or disprove a proposition in therapeutics is of a peculiar kind. "It differs entirely from that species of proof which satisfies a court of law." The statement that a certain disease within one's observation or experience was cured by a certain remedy, would by many be regarded as the statement of a single fact, to be accepted according to the credibility of the witness; whereas, it is the expression of several opinions, either of which, however sincerely entertained, may be erroneous. The patient may not have had the supposed disease; he may not have taken the alleged remedy; the disease, if real, may not have been removed—may still continue; but if the disease existed as stated, the supposed remedy was given, and the disease disappeared, the recovery may not have been due to the remedy.

Certificates, sincerely made, of cures of cancers, of advanced consumptions, and of numerous other diseases, by nostrums which no physician of any school could believe efficacious, are illustrations of such errors.

An experience of the late Professor Chomel, of Paris, is related, which so aptly illustrates fallacious conclusions from inexact observations that it may be quoted:

"The common holly having been much praised as a remedy for ague, he determined to test it in the Hospital La Charité. Twenty-two cases of the disease were directed to him. After their admission, he purposely abstained from all treatment for several days, in order to see that they were well-marked cases. He found that of the twenty-two, *seven* never had another paroxysm, *four* had paroxysms of decreasing severity, *eight* had nothing but symptomatic paroxysms, connected with slight inflammation of the mucous membranes, which yielded to simple treatment; *three* only were fit subjects for experiments, *i. e.*, had essential intermittent fever, preserving all its intensity for three or four paroxysms. The remedy (holly) was given to these, but entirely failed in all of them. Quinine was then given in the ordinary way, and the paroxysms were immediately stopped. If, from the day of admission, the remedy had been given to the whole, the conclusion would have been that it had cured nineteen out of twenty-two; and the three cases—the only ones proper to test the remedy—would have been regarded as exceptional."

In estimating the value of all experience in medicine, it must be remembered that a large proportion of ordinary diseases are self-limited, that most sick persons will recover without medicine, and that proper nursing and confidence in those in attendance will contribute to the result. The individual judgment, even of the intelligent and judicious, may readily be misled; and the popular judgment may be carried away by the exaggerated statements of the interested and the enthusiastic. All the earlier reported remarkable successes of homeopathic treatment of severe diseases were with the Hahnemannian infinitesimals; and of the correctness of such reports, after knowing what these dilutions are, the reader will judge. Scientifically conducted experiments with homeopathic dilutions were long ago made by Andral in the hospitals of Paris, and by other eminent regular physicians, and always with negative results. Some patients doubtless improved while these medicines were being administered, but not in consequence of their administration, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge. Indeed, a majority of leading homeopaths now deny the efficacy of imponderable doses, though the schools and text-books teach their use, and most of the homeopaths, though resorting to other remedies, still give the sugar pellets. Some very recent experiments, conducted by members of the homeopathic fraternity in the West, for the purpose of testing the ability to distinguish by their effects between unmedicated and medicated globules, are authentically reported to have resulted in a failure.

As already intimated, there is not a tenet, as presented by the founder of the system, which has not been rejected by numbers

who are regarded as of high authority in the homeopathic fraternity. The denial of the efficacy of the higher dilutions is an admission that all the wonderful reported success in the past of Hahnemann and his followers was deceptive. Their treatment and provings were with dilutions and alleged "potencies."

The only scientific fact which gives any show of plausibility to the doctrine of *similia similibus curantur*, as even a subordinate law of cure, is, that some medicines appear to have in small doses an effect opposite to what they manifest in large doses. The most conspicuous of such remedies is ipecacuanha, which in large doses produces vomiting, and in small ones *sometimes* allays that symptom. This occasional opposition of large and small doses is a fact for which the profession is not indebted to homeopathy. All that is known on the subject is the property of the regular profession. It is not, however, a universal or even a general fact, and is not of sufficient frequency and regularity to be generally available in practice. Whenever thought applicable, the principle is resorted to by regular physicians, and with perfect consistency, as they have no system of dogmas which confines them to any restricted practice, or which prevents them from prescribing any remedies in any doses found, or believed to be, useful. A belief in the frequent application of this principle, and practice in accordance with that belief, even to what would be generally thought a very erroneous extent, would not deprive one of recognition by the regular profession. Great liberty of opinion and action in the choice of remedies within the bounds of common sense and common sanity, has ever been allowed. The adhesion to an absurd exclusive system, and the banding in a sect which denounces and seeks to destroy confidence in regular medicine is that which cannot be tolerated.

A few physicians of prominence in England have recently suggested the propriety of meeting members of this sect in consultation, notwithstanding the acknowledged utter absurdity of their professed views and practices, and their well-known denunciations of regular medicine. These suggestions, it is predicted, will not meet with acceptance from the profession, for reasons which must be obvious to those who have followed the preceding statements respecting the homeopathic doctrines.

The object of medical consultations is to benefit the patient — to secure for him by exchange of opinions and by *mutual agreement* the best course of treatment. It is too evident to require to be stated that there can be no agreement between a regular

physician having any established professional views and a sincere homeopathist. No benefit can arise to the patient from the practical disagreement which would be inevitable. The conscientious believer in the universal principle of *similia similibus* could not consent to the use of any remedy not selected in accordance with that law. One believing in the efficacy of infinitesimals and in the injurious effects of medicines in crude forms and sensible doses, could not consent with any regard to the supposed interests of his patient to the administration of the larger doses. If, for the purpose of securing patronage, the homeopathist pretends to a superior system in which he does not believe, and to a better practice which he does not follow, he is a charlatan and a pretender, unworthy of confidence or honorable associations. If a regular physician, for the sake of a consultation fee, or for the purpose of obtaining popular favor, sacrifices his convictions, relinquishes measures in which he has confidence and consents to a practice he is sure is useless, he may be a fitting person for such consultations, but he is not an honorable member of an honorable profession. If between an honest homeopathist and an equally honest regular physician there can be no agreement and coöperation in the treatment of a case, consultations between such are certainly useless; and no opinions need be expressed respecting consultations between parties one or both of whom are insincere. Should the homeopathist abandon his system or the regular physician embrace it, then there may be harmony and agreement; but until then consistency and honor no less than proper professional feeling will forbid the unnatural alliance.

The honest and honorable man who has been educated in the homeopathic doctrines and has been brought into the homeopathic fraternity, but who has become convinced of the essential error of the system, will openly abandon it—will no longer march in its ranks or be called by its name. One who rejects the homeopathic creed and is unwilling to occupy a false position will follow the example which some well-known and honored men now in the ranks of the regular profession have set; and by declaring his position and leaving his former associations, will obtain recognition and a position which his talents and character will earn for him.

These are the views which most men will take. None are more positive in their declarations against the unnatural alli-

ance than the leading authorities among the homeopathsists themselves. Dr. Rau, in his "Organon," says: "The principle of *similia similibus* is the barrier which separates the new from the old school. It is impossible to combine these two schools; any such combination would constitute a most miserable abortion." And Hahnemann had the sanity and the sense to say that homeopathy would ever be separated from what he calls allopathy "by an impassable gulf." Any attempt to permanently bridge the chasm over, even by a Bristowe or a Hutchinson, must result in failure.

In this article no attempt has been made to specify the achievements of the regular profession, or to either defend or criticise its doctrines or practice. It would be an easy task to point out its present scientific methods and the great results they have accomplished. It would also be easy to refer to differences of opinions and contradictions of statements on various questions of pathology and therapeutics, or to find various expressions of skepticism as to the consistency of some doctrines, or the efficacy of various methods of treatment advised in its works. As upon all other subjects not physically or mathematically demonstrable, there are differences of opinion among thinking men, who are not bound by fixed creeds, acceptance of which is essential to membership in a fraternity. It must be remembered that, different from the homeopathic system, there is in the regular profession no fixed creed, no alleged universal principle the acceptance of which is necessary to the retention of a chosen designation. Homeopathy is a specific, well-defined thing, or it is nothing. If the doctrines of *similia similibus curantur*, and of the efficacy of infinitesimal doses, etc., are not held as true, the system has no real existence. If these doctrines are not in reality true, then the system is a fiction.

In geology there are many facts and inferences which are fixed and unquestionable, but also many theories and opinions that are contradictory and doubtful. Geology is, nevertheless, a science, and those who are devoted to it constitute a kind of fraternity, but without a dogmatic creed. It is so with scientific medicine, but not the same with the homeopathic system of dogmas. These dogmas must be held or all is yielded; they must be true or the system is false. Associated with a false system there may be truths, and with a true science there may be errors, but to science all truth belongs, while to false systems truth is alien.

Modern science has demonstrated the cause of some diseases (as examples, the relapsing fever in man and the "splenic fever" and "chicken cholera" in animals) to be organic parasitic poisons; and the general professional belief is, that all the specific diseases, such as cholera, malarial, typhoid, typhus, yellow, puerperal, and the eruptive fevers, are produced by zymotic or organic living poisons, and that the great curative remedies of the future will be antidotes and eliminatives for their destruction or expulsion. In view of the present state and drift of science, of the phenomenal character of diseases, the existence of specific causes, and the present and hoped-for discoveries of antidotal and expelling remedies, how absurd become the dreams of exclusive systems; particularly of this pretended universal therapeutical principle of "like-cure" and its dependent doctrines. Such unfounded speculations, originating in the darkness of the past and kept alive by the visionary or interested of the present, must recede more and more into the obscurity of past follies as science advances.

A. B. PALMER.